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AN
ESSAY on SATIRE:

Occasion'd by the

DEATH of Mr. *POPE*.

O sacred Weapon, left for Truth's Defence,
Sole Dread of Folly, Vice, and Insolence!
To all, but Heav'n-directed Hands, deny'd,
The Muse may give thee, but the Gods must guide.

LONDON:

Printed for R. DODSLEY at Tully's Head in Pall-Mall.

M.DCC.XLV.

[Price One Shilling.]

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AN

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AN ESSAY ON SATIRE, &c.

FATE gave the word, the cruel arrow ſped,
And POPE lies number'd with the mighty dead.
Exulting Dulneſs ey'd the ſetting light,
And flapp'd her wing, impatient for the night:
Guilt at the ſignal rowzing all her train,
Broods o'er the glories of her growing reign:
Th' envenom'd monſters ſpit their deadly foam,
To blaſt the laurel that ſurrounds his tomb:
With inextinguiſhable rage they burn,
And ſnake-hung Envy hiſſes o'er his urn.

But

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But thou whoſe eye, from paſſion's film refin'd,
Can ſee true greatneſs in an honeſt mind;
Can ſee each virtue and each grace unite,
And taſte the raptures of a PURE delight;
O viſit oft his awful page with care,
And view the bright aſſemblage treaſur'd there.—
Yet deign to hear the efforts of a muſe,
Whoſe eye, not wing, his ardent flight purſues;
Intent from this great archetype to draw,
Or faintly ſhadow SATIRE's pow'r and law;
Pleas'd, if from hence th' unlearn'd may comprehend,
And rev'rence HIS and SATIRE's generous end.

1. In ev'ry breaſt there burns an active flame,
The love of glory, or the dread of ſhame:
The paſſion ONE, tho' diff'rent forms it wear,
As brighten'd into hope, or ſunk by fear:
The liſping infant, and the hoary ſire,
And youth and manhood feel the heart-born fire:
The charms of praiſe the coy, the modeſt wooe,
And fly from glory that ſhe may purſue:

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(As Galatea †, playful on the green,
Hides in the grove, yet wiſhes to be ſeen :)
She, pow'rful goddeſs, rules the wiſe and great;
Bends ev'n reluctant hermits at her feet :
Haunts the proud city, and the lowly ſhade,
And ſways alike the ſcepter and the ſpade.

Heav'n thus in man it's friendly pow'r diſplays,
To urge him on to deeds that merit praiſe :
But man, vain man, to folly only wiſe,
Rejects the Manna ſent him from the ſkies :
With rapture hears corrupted paſſion's call,
Still proudly prone to mingle with the ſtall.
As each deceitful ſhadow tempts his view,
He for imagin'd ſubſtance quits the true :
Eager to catch the viſionary prize,
In queſt of glory plunges deep in vice;
Till madly zealous, impotently vain,
He forfeits ev'ry praiſe he pants to gain.

Thus

† ---------- *Galatea laſciva Puella*
Fugit ad Salices, ſed ſe cupit ante videri. VIRG.

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Thus ſtill imperious nature plies her part,
And ſtill her dictates work in ev'ry heart:
Each pow'r that ſovereign nature bids enjoy,
Man may corrupt, but man can ne'er deſtroy:
Like mighty rivers, with reſiſtleſs force
The paſſions rage, obſtructed in their courſe;
Swell to new heights, forbidden paths explore,
And drown thoſe virtues which they fed before.
And ſure the deadlieſt foe to virtue's flame,
Our worſt of evils, is *perverted ſhame.*
Beneath this yoke what abject numbers groan,
The ſhackled ſlaves to folly not their own!
Blind to ourſelves, by ſordid fear oppreſs'd,
We ſeek our Virtues in each other's breaſt;
Meanly adopt another's wild caprice,
Another's weakneſs, or another's vice.
Each tool to hood-wink'd pride, ſo poorly great,
That pines in ſplendid wretchedneſs of ſtate,
Tir'd in ambition's chaſe, would nobly yield,
And but for ſhame, like Sylla, quit the field:

The

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The dæmon *Shame* paints ſtrong the ridicule,
And whiſpers cloſe "*the world will call you fool.*"
Behold, yon wretch, to impious madneſs driv'n,
Believes and trembles, while he ſcoffs at heav'n:
By weakneſs ſtrong, and bold thro' fear alone,
He dreads the ſneer by ſhallow coxcombs thrown,
Dauntleſs purſues the path Spinoza trod,
To man a coward, a bravoe to GOD †.
Truth, juſtice, heav'n, in vain ſhall claim their pow'r,
If the heart court fantaſtick honour more:
Thus virtue ſinks beneath unnumber'd woes,
When paſſions born her friends, revolt, her foes.
Hence SATIRE's pow'r: 'Tis her inſtructive part,
To calm the wild diſorders of the heart:
She points the arduous height where glory lies,
And teaches mad ambition to be wiſe;

† *Vois-tu ce Libertin en public intrepide,*
Qui preche contre un Dieu que dans ſon ame il croit?
Il iroit embraſſer la verité qu'il voit:
Mais de ſes faux amis il craint la raillerie,
Et ne brave ainſi Dieu que par poltronnerie. BOIL. Ep. 3.

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From foul example kindles fair desire,
Draws good from ill, from flint elicits fire;
Like the nice BEE, with art most subtly true
From poys'nous vice extracts a healing dew †,
Strips black oppression of her gay disguise,
And bids the hag in native horror rise;
Strikes bloated pride, and lawless rapine dead,
And plants the wreath of fame on virtue's head.
Nor boasts the muse imaginary pow'r,
Tho' oft' she mourn those ills she cannot cure:
The worthy court her, and the worthless fear;
Who hate her piercing eye, that eye revere:
Her awful voice the vain and vile obey,
And ev'ry foe to wisdom feels her sway:
Smarts, pedants, as she smiles, no more grow vain;
Desponding fops resign the clouded cane:
Hush'd at her voice, pert folly's self is still,
And dulness wonders while she drops her quill.

Her

† Parody on these lines of Mr. POPE:

In the nice BEE *what art so subtly true*
From poys'nous herbs extracts a healing dew.

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Her hand from vice fair virtues oft hath ſprung,
As the ſkill'd planter raiſes flow'rs from dung:
Weak are the ties which publick art can find,
To quell the madneſs of the tainted mind:
Cunning evades, ſecurely wrapt in wiles;
And force ſtrong-ſinew'd rends th'unequal toils:
The ſtream of vice impetuous drives along,
Too deep for policy, for pow'r too ſtrong:
Ev'n fair religion, native of the ſkies,
Scorn'd by the fool, ſeeks refuge with the wiſe:
But SATIRE's arrow ſearches ev'ry breaſt:
She plays a *ruling* paſſion on the reſt:
Faſt binds the ſlave that earth and heav'n defy'd,
And awes him from the battery of his pride.
When fell corruption, by her vaſſals crown'd,
Derides fall'n juſtice proſtrate on the ground;
Swift to redreſs an injur'd people's groan,
Bold SATIRE ſhakes the tyrant on her throne;
Pow'rful as death, defies the ſordid train,
And ſlaves and ſycophants ſurround in vain.

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But with the friends of vice, the foes of SATIRE,
All truth is ſpleen, all ſpirit is ill-nature.——
Well may they dread the Muſe's fatal ſkill;
Well may they tremble when ſhe draws her quill:
Her magick quill, that like Ithuriel's ſpear
Diſplays the cloven hoof, or lengthen'd ear;
Bids vice and folly take unborrow'd ſhapes,
Turns Ducheſſes to * ſtrumpets, beaux to apes,
Drags the vile whiſperer from his dark abode,
Till all the dæmon ſtarts up from the toad.
O ſordid maxim, form'd to ſcreen the vile,
That true good-nature ſtill muſt wear a ſmile!
In frowns involv'd her beauties ſtronger riſe,
When love of virtue wakes her ſcorn of vice:
Where juſtice calls, 'tis cruelty to ſave;
And 'tis the law's good-nature hangs the knave.
Who combats virtue's foe, is virtue's friend;
Then judge of SATIRE's merit by her end:
To guilt alone her vengeance ſtands confin'd,
The object of her love is all mankind.

They

* Not *theſe* into Ducheſſes; which is but a modern art.

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They leaſt are pain'd, who merit Satire moſt:
Folly the Laureat's, vice was Chartres' boaſt:
And ſure 'tis juſt to gibbet high the name
Of fools and knaves already dead to ſhame.
Oft' SATIRE acts the faithful ſurgeon's part;
Generous and kind, tho' painful is her art:
Her optics all the dark diſeaſe explore,
Her weapon launces wide the gangreen'd ſore;
Deep wounds hypocriſy's fair-ſeeming ſkin,
Where death in ulcerous humours lurks within:
With caution bold, ſhe only ſtrikes to heal,
Tho' folly burns to break the friendly ſteel.
Then ſure no guilt impartial SATIRE knows,
Kind, even in vengeance kind to virtue's foes:
Whoſe is the crime, the ſcandal too be their's:
The knave and fool are their own libellers.

2. *Dare nobly then:* But conſcious of your truſt,
As ever warm and bold, be ever juſt:
Nor court applauſe in theſe degenerate days;
The hate of villains is extorted praiſe.

O'er

O'er all be ſteady in a noble end,
And ſhew mankind that truth has yet a friend.
'Tis mean for empty praiſe of wit to write
(As Foplings laugh to ſhow their teeth are white;)
To laſh a doubtful folly with a ſmile,
Or madly blaze unknown defects, is vile:
'Tis doubly vile, when but to prove your art,
You fix an arrow in a blameleſs heart.
O loſt to honour's call, O doom'd to ſhame,
Thou fiend accurs'd, thou murderer of fame!
Fell raviſher, from innocence to tear
That name, than life, than freedom held more dear:
To breathe contagion o'er the ſpringing flow'r:
Procruſtes like, in wantonneſs of pow'r
To torture truth and virtue till they fit,
And die in pangs upon the rack of wit!
Where ſhall thy baſeneſs meet it's juſt return,
Or what repay thy guilt, but endleſs ſcorn!
And know, immortal truth ſhall mock thy toil:
Immortal truth ſhall bid the ſhaft recoil;

With

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With rage redoubled, wing the deadly dart;
And ſteep it's load of poiſon in thy heart.
Let SATIRE next, her proper limits know;
And e'er ſhe ſtrike, *be ſure* ſhe ſtrikes a foe.
Nor fondly deem, you ſpy a real fool
At each gay impulſe of blind *ridicule*;
Before whoſe altar virtue oft' hath bled,
And oft' a fated victim ſhall be led:
Lo! * Shaftsb'ry rears her high on reaſon's throne,
And loads the ſlave with honours not her own:

Big-

* It were to be wiſhed that Lord *Shaftſbury* had expreſſed himſelf with greater preciſion on this ſubject: However, thus much may be affirmed with truth.

1ſt, By the general tenour of his Eſſays on *Enthuſiaſm*, and the *Freedom of Wit and Humour*, it appears that his principal deſign was to recommend the *Way of Ridicule* (as he calls it) for the *Inveſtigation* of Truth, and *Detection* of Falſhood, not only in *moral* but *religious* ſubjects.

2dly, It appears no leſs evident, that in the courſe of his reaſonings on this queſtion, he confounds two things which are in their nature and conſequences entirely different. Theſe are, *Ridicule* and *Good-Humour*: the *latter* acknowledged by all to be the beſt *Mediator* in every debate; the *former* no leſs regarded by moſt, as an *Embroiler* and *Incendiary*. Tho' he ſets out with a formal profeſſion of proving the efficacy of Wit, Humour, and Ridicule in the inveſtigation of Truth, yet by ſhifting and mixing his terms, he generally ſlides inſenſibly into mere encomiums on Good-Breeding, Chearfulneſs, Urbanity, and free Enquiry. This indeed keeps ſomething like an argument on foot, and amuſes the ſuperficial reader; but to a more obſervant eye diſcovers a very contemptible defect either of ſincerity or penetration.

The queſtion concerning Ridicule may be thus not improperly ſtated: Whether *doubtful* Propoſitions of any kind can be *aſcertained* by the application of *Ridicule?* Much might be ſaid on this queſtion; but a few words will make the matter clear to an unprejudiced mind.

The Diſapprobation or Contempt which certain objects raiſe in the mind of man, is a particular mode of Paſſion: the objects of this paſſion are *apparent* Falſhood, Incongruity,

Big-ſwoln with folly, as her ſmiles provoke,
Profaneneſs ſpawns, pert dulneſs drops a joke!
Say, ſhall we join a while this gaping crew,
And prove at leaſt, the ideot *may* be true;
Deride our weak forefathers' muſty rule,
Who *therefore* ſmil'd, *becauſe* they ſaw a fool?

Sublimer

gruity, or Impropriety of ſome particular kinds. Thus, the object of Fear is *apparent* Danger, or probable approaching Ill. But who has ever dreamt of exalting the paſſion of *Fear* into a *Standard* or *Teſt* of *real Danger*? The deſign muſt have been rejected as abſurd, becauſe it is the work of Reaſon *only*, to correct and fix the paſſion on its proper objects. The caſe is parallel: *apparent* or *ſeeming* Falſhoods, &c. are the objects of Contempt; but it is the work of Reaſon *only*, to determine whether the *ſuppoſed* Falſhoods be *real* or *fictitious*. But it is ſaid, "The *Senſe of Ridicule* can never be miſtaken."——Why, no more can the *Senſe of Danger*.——"What, do men never *fear* without reaſon?"——Yes, very commonly; but they as often *deſpiſe* and *laugh* without reaſon. And thus, before any thing can be determined in either caſe, Reaſon, and Reaſon only, muſt examine Circumſtances, ſeparate Ideas, decide upon, reſtrain, and correct the Paſſion.

Hence it follows, that the *way of Ridicule* is in fact no more than a *ſpecies of Eloquence*: It applies to a Paſſion, and therefore can go no farther in the inveſtigation of Truth, than any of thoſe arts which tend to raiſe Love, Pity, Terror, Rage or Hatred in the heart of man. Conſequently, his Lordſhip might have tranſplanted the *whole Syſtem of Rhetorick* into his new ſcheme, with the ſame propriety as he hath introduced the *way of Ridicule* itſelf. A hopeful project this, for the propagation of Truth!

As this ſeems to be the real nature and tendency of Ridicule, it hath been generally diſcouraged by *Philoſophers* and *Divines*, together with every other mode of eloquence, when apply'd to *controverted Opinions*. This diſcouragement, from what is ſaid above, appears to have been rational and juſt; therefore the charge laid againſt *Divines* with regard to this affair by a zealous admirer of Lord *Shaftſbury* (See a note on the *Pleaſures of Imagination*, Book III.) ſeems entirely groundleſs. The diſtinction which the ſame author hath attempted with reſpect to the influence of Ridicule, between *ſpeculative* and *moral Truths*, ſeems no better founded. It is certain that *Opinions* are no leſs liable to Ridicule than *Actions*. And it is no leſs certain that the way of Ridicule cannot *determine* the Propriety or Impropriety of the *one*, more than the Truth or Falſhood of the *other*; becauſe the ſame paſſion of Contempt is equally engaged in both caſes, and therefore (as above) Reaſon *only* can examine the circumſtances of the *Action* or *Opinion*, and thus fix the Paſſion on its *proper* Objects.

Upon the whole, this new deſign of *diſcovering Truth* by the *vague* and *unſteady Light of Ridicule*, puts one in mind of the honeſt *Iriſhman*, who apply'd his *Candle* to the *Sun-Dial* in order to ſee how the Night went.

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Sublimer logick now adorns our iſle;
We *therefore* ſee a fool, *becauſe* we ſmile:
Truth in her gloomy cave why fondly ſeek?
Lo! gay ſhe ſits in laughter's dimpled cheek:
Contemns each ſurly academick foe,
And courts the ſpruce free-thinker and the beau:
Dædalian arguments but few can trace,
But all can ſcrew the muſcles of their face:
Hence mighty Ridicule's all-conqu'ring hand
Shall work Herculean wonders thro' the land:
Bound in the magick of her cobweb chain,
Great WARBURTON ſhall rage, but rage in vain;
Truth's ſacred prize the loudeſt horſe-laugh win;
And coxcombs vanquiſh BERKLEY by a grin.
But you more wiſe, reject th' inverted rule,
That truth is e'er explor'd by ridicule:
On truth, on falſehood let her colours fall,
She throws a dazzling glare alike on all:
Beware the mad advent'rer: Bold and blind
She hoiſts her ſail, and drives with ev'ry wind,

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Deaf as the ſtorm to ſinking virtue's groan,
Nor heeds a friend's deſtruction, or her own.
Let clear-ey'd reaſon at the helm preſide,
Bear to the wind, or ſtem the furious tide:
Then mirth may urge when reaſon can explore,
This point the way, that waft us to the ſhore.
Tho' diſtant times be ſketch'd in SATIRE's page,
Yet chief, 'tis her's to draw the *preſent age*:
With wiſdom's luſtre, folly's ſhade contraſt,
And judge the reigning manners by the paſt:
Bid Britain's Heroes (awful ſhades!) ariſe,
And ancient honour beam on modern vice:
Point back to minds ingenuous, actions fair,
Till the ſons bluſh at what their fathers were;
E'er yet 'twas beggary the great to truſt;
E'er yet 'twas quite a ſcandal to be juſt;
When vulgar ſharpers only dar'd a lye,
Or falſify'd the card, or cogg'd the dye;
E'er lewdneſs the ſtain'd garb of honour wore,
Or chaſtity was carted for the whore,

Vice

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Vice ſtrutted in the plumes of freedom dreſs'd;
Or publick ſpirit was the publick jeſt:
E'er yet indignant SATIRE's honeſt page
Was fir'd to vengeance by an iron age,
The parent and the nurſe of ev'ry crime,
The dregs, the drainings of exhauſted time.
Be ever in a juſt expreſſion bold,
Yet ne'er degrade fair SATIRE to a ſcold:
Let no unworthy rage her form debaſe,
But let her ſmile, and let her frown with grace:
In mirth be temperate, decent in her ſpleen;
Nor, while ſhe preaches modeſty, obſcene:
Deep let her wound, not rankle to a ſore;
Nor call his lordſhip ——, her grace a ——:
The muſe's charms with ſureſt force aſſail,
When wrapt in Irony's tranſparent veil:
Her beauties half-conceal'd the more ſurprize,
And keener luſtre ſparkles in her eyes.
Then be your line with ſharp encomiums grac'd:
Stile Clodius honourable, Burſa chaſte:

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For memoirs, Ayre the glory of the nation;
Cibber for ode, and Gordon for tranſlation †.

Dart not on Folly an indignant eye:
Who e'er diſcharg'd artillery on a fly?
Laugh not at vice: abſurd the thought and vain,
To bind the tiger in ſo weak a chain:
Nay more: when flagrant crimes your laughter move,
The knave exults: to ſmile is to approve.
The muſe's labour then ſucceſs ſhall crown,
When Folly feels her ſmile, and Vice her frown.

Know next what meaſures to each theme belong,
And ſuit your thoughts and numbers to your ſong;
On wings proportion'd to your quarry riſe,
And ſtoop to earth, or ſoar among the ſkies.
Thus when prevailing folly claims a ſmile,
Free the expreſſion, humble be the ſtile:
In ſtrains adapted ſing the midnight toil
Of Camps and S---s diſciplin'd by Hoyle.
In artleſs numbers paint th' ambitious P----r,
That mounts the box, and ſhines a charioteer,

For

† Of TACITUS.

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For glory warm, the leathern belt puts on,
And ſmacks the whip with art, and rivals John;
Or *him* whoſe moderate ambition reaches
But to his hip, a connoiſſeur in breeches,
Proud with his ſheers to clip his way to fame,
And grope for glory while he covers ſhame.
Let SATIRE here in milder beauty ſhine,
And gayly graceful ſport along the line;
Bid awkard folly quit her thin pretence,
And ſmile each affectation into ſenſe.
Not ſo when Virtue by her guards betray'd,
Spurn'd from her throne, implores the muſe's aid:
When *crimes* which erſt in kindred darkneſs lay,
Riſe frontleſs and inſult the eye of day:
When weeping Hymen veils his hallow'd fires,
And white-rob'd Chaſtity with ſighs retires;
And rank Adultery on the marriage bed
Hot from Cocytus rears her crimſon head:
When private Faith and publick Truſt are ſold,
And traitors barter Liberty for gold:

When

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When fell Corruption dark and deep as fate,
Saps the foundation of a tottering ſtate:
When Giant-Vice and Irreligion riſe
On mountain'd falſehoods to invade the ſkies: - - -
Then warmer numbers glow thro' SATIRE's page,
And all her ſmiles are darken'd into rage:
On eagle wing ſhe gains Parnaſſus' height,
Not lofty Epic ſoars a nobler flight;
The conſcious mountain trembles at her nod,
And ev'ry awful geſture ſpeaks the God:
Then keener indignation fires her eye.
Then flaſh her light'nings, and her thunders fly;
Wide and more wide the flaming bolts are hurl'd,
Till all her wrath involves the guilty world.
Yet SATIRE oft' aſſumes a gentler mein,
And beams on virtue's friends a ſmile ſerene;
Reluctant wounds, but pours her balm with joy,
Pleas'd to commend, where merit ſtrikes her eye.
But tread with caution this enchanted ground,
Inclos'd by faithleſs precipices round:

Truth

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Truth be your guide: diſdain ambition's call:
And if you fall with Truth, you greatly fall.
'Tis virtue's *native Luſtre* that muſt *ſhine*:
The poet can but *ſet* it in his line:
And who unmov'd with laughter can behold
A *dirty Pebble* meanly grac'd with gold?
Let real merit then adorn your lays,
For ſhame attends on proſtituted praiſe:
And all your wit, your moſt diſtinguiſh'd art
Can only prove, you want an honeſt heart.
Nor think the Muſe by SATIRE's law confin'd:
She yields deſcription of the nobleſt kind.
Great is the toil, the latent ſoul to trace,
To paint the heart, and catch internal grace;
By turns bid vice and virtue ſtrike our eyes,
Now bid a WOLSEY or SEJANUS riſe;
Now with a touch more ſacred and refin'd,
Call forth a BRUTUS' or a SCIPIO's mind;
Here ſweet or ſtrong may ev'ry colour flow:
Here let the pencil warm, the canvaſs glow:

Of

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Of light and ſhade provoke the noble ſtrife,
And wake the ſwelling figures into life.
3. Thro' ages thus hath SATIRE greatly ſhin'd,
The friend to truth, to virtue, and mankind:
Yet the fair plant from virtue ne'er had ſprung;
And man was guilty e'er the Poet ſung.
With joy the Muſe beheld each better age,
Till glowing crimes had wak'd her into rage:
Truth ſaw her honeſt ſpleen with juſt delight,
And bad her wing her ſhafts, and urge their flight:
Firſt on the ſons of Greece ſhe prov'd her art,
And Sparta felt the fierce IAMBICK Dart †.
To Latium next, avenging SATIRE flew:
The flaming faulcion bold LUCILIUS * drew;
With dauntleſs warmth in virtue's cauſe engag'd,
And conſcious villains trembled as he rag'd.
Next,

† *Archilocum proprio rabies armavit Iambo.* HOR.

* *Enſe velut ſtricto quoties Lucilius ardens*
Infremuit, rubet auditor cui frigida mens eſt
Criminibus, tacita ſudant præcordia culpa. JUV. Sat. 1.

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Next, playful HORACE † caught the generous fire;
For SATIRE's bow reſign'd the ſounding lyre:
Each arrow poliſh'd in his hand was ſeen,
And as it grew more poliſh'd, grew more keen.
He cloath'd his art in ſtudy'd negligence,
Politely ſly, cajol'd the foes of ſenſe;
Seem'd but to ſport and trifle with the dart,
But while he ſported, ſtab'd them to the heart.
In graver ſtrains majeſtick PERSIUS wrote,
Big with a ripe exuberance of thought:
Greatly ſedate, contemn'd a tyrant's reign,
And laſh'd corruption with a calm diſdain:
Yet far from vulgar eyes remov'd his ſeat;
Vaſt chains of rocks incloſe the green retreat:
Let BOND conduct you thro' the dark profound,
And fair poetick ſcenes ſhall open round.
More ardent eloquence, and boundleſs rage
Devour, in JUVENAL's exalted page:

† *Omne vafer vitium ridenti Flaccus amico*
Tangit, & admiſſus circum præcordia ludit,
Callidus excuſſo populum ſuſpendere naſo. PERS. Sat. 1.

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His mighty numbers aw'd corrupted *Rome*,
And ſwept audacious greatneſs to it's doom;
As headlong torrents thund'ring from on high,
Rend the proud rock that lately brav'd the ſky.
But lo! the fatal victor of mankind,
Swoln *Luxury!* —— and *Ruin* ſtalks behind!
As countleſs inſects from the North-eaſt pour,
To blaſt the ſpring, and ravage ev'ry flow'r;
So barb'rous millions ſpread contagious death,
The ſick'ning laurel wither'd at their breath:
Deep Superſtition's night the ſkies o'erhung,
Beneath whoſe baleful dews the poppy ſprung.
No longer Genius woo'd the Nine to love,
But dulneſs nodded in the Muſe's grove;
Wit, ſpirit, freedom were the ſole offence,
Nor aught was held ridiculous but ſenſe.
At length, again fair Science ſhot her ray,
Dawn'd in the ſkies, and ſpoke returning day:
Now SATIRE, triumph o'er thy flying foe,
Whet, whet thy arrows, and reſume thy bow!

See,

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See, great ERASMUS breaks the pow'rful ſpell,
And wounds triumphant folly in her cell!
In vain the ſolemn cowl ſurrounds her face,
Vain all her bigot cant, her ſow'r grimace;
With ſhame compell'd her giddy throne to quit,
And own the force of reaſon urg'd by wit.
'Twas then plain DONNE in honeſt vengeance 'roſe,
His wit refulgent, tho' his rhyme were proſe:
He 'midſt an age of puns and pedants wrote
With genuine ſenſe, and Roman ſtrength of thought.
Yet ſcarce had SATIRE well relum'd her flame,
(With grief the muſe relates her country's ſhame)
E'er Britain ſaw the foul revolt commence,
And treacherous Wit began her war with Senſe.
Then 'roſe a ſhameleſs, mercenary crew,
Whom lateſt time with juſt contempt ſhall view:
A race fantaſtick, in whoſe page you ſee
Untutor'd fancy, a meer *Jeu d'Eſprit*:
Wit's ſhatter'd mirror lies in fragments bright,
Reflects not nature, but confounds the ſight.

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Dry morals the court-poet bluſh'd to ſing;
'Twas all his praiſe to ſay "*the oddeſt thing:*"
By quaint conceits and turns of wit ſurprize,
And puff poetick duſt into your eyes.
Perhaps ſome virtue was his awkward theme,
When the light purſe inſpir'd a darker dream:
When active hunger urg'd her lawleſs pow'r,
Or the ſtern bailiff thunder'd at the door:
But lo! again the *Splendid Shilling* ſhines,
And the bard grows immoral as he dines;
Proud, for a jeſt obſcene, a patron's nod,
To martyr virtue, or blaſpheme his God.
Unhappy DRYDEN! who unmov'd can ſee,
Th' extremes of wit and meanneſs joyn'd in thee!
Flames that could mount and gain their kindred ſkies,
Low-creeping in the putrid ſink of vice:
A muſe whom truth and wiſdom woo'd in vain,
The pimp of pow'r, the proſtitute to gain.
Wreaths that ſhou'd deck fair Virtue's form alone,
To ſtrumpets, traitors, tyrants, vilely thrown:

Unrival'd

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Unrival'd parts, the ſcorn of honeſt fame;
And genius riſe, a monument of ſhame!
More happy France: immortal BOILEAU there
Protected wiſdom with a father's care:
Him with her love propitious SATIRE bleſs'd,
And breath'd her airs divine into his breaſt:
To form his line, perfection's laws conſpire,
And faultleſs judgment guides unbounded fire:
Whether he ſmiles at folly's fond caprice,
Or pours the thunder of his rage on vice.
But ſee at length relenting SATIRE ſmile,
And ſhow'r her choiceſt boon on BRITAIN's iſle:
Behold, for POPE ſhe twines the laurel crown,
And leads the bard triumphant to his throne;
Deſpairing guilt and dulneſs loath the ſight,
As goblins vaniſh at approaching light;
The gentle Thames, that pours his urn faſt by,
Surveys the ſtructure with revering eye;
To a clear mirror ſmooths his glaſſy tide,
Proud to reflect a nation's juſteſt pride.

But

But oh! what thoughts, what numbers shall I find,
But faintly to express the Poet's mind!
Who yonder star's effulgence can display,
Unless he dip his pencil in the ray?
Who paint a God, unless the God inspire?
What catch the lightning, but the speed of fire?
So, mighty Pope, to make thy genius known,
All pow'r is weak, all numbers but thy own.
For thee each Muse with kind contention strove,
For thee the Graces left th' Idalian grove;
With watchful fondness o'er thy cradle hung,
Attun'd thy voice, and form'd thy infant tongue.
Next, to her bard majestick Wisdom came;
The bard enraptur'd caught the vigorous flame:
With taste superior scorn'd the venal tribe;
Whom fear can sway, or guilty greatness bribe;
At fancy's call who fear the wanton sail,
Sport with the stream, and trifle in the gale;
Sublimer views thy daring spirit bound;
Thy mighty voyage was Creation's round;

Intent,

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Intent, new worlds of ſcience to explore,
And bleſs mankind with wiſdom's ſacred ſtore;
A nobler joy than wit can give, impart;
And pour a moral tranſport o'er the heart.
Fantaſtick wit ſhoots momentary fires,
And like a meteor, while we gaze, expires;
Wit kindled by the ſulph'rous breath of vice,
Like the blue lightning, while it ſhines, deſtroys;
But genius fir'd by truth's eternal ray,
Burns clear and conſtant, like the ſource of day;
Like this, it's beam prolifick and refin'd,
Feeds, warms, inſpirits, and exalts the mind;
Mildly diſpells each wintry paſſion's gloom,
And opens all the virtues into bloom.
This praiſe, immortal POPE, to thee be giv'n;
Thy genius was indeed a gift from heav'n.
Hail, bard unequal'd, in whoſe deathleſs line
Reaſon and wit with ſtrength collected ſhine;
Where matchleſs wit but wins the ſecond praiſe,
Loſt, nobly loſt, in Truth's ſuperior blaze.
Did friendſhip e'er miſlead his wandering muſe?
O let that friendſhip plead the *great* excuſe;

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That ſacred friendſhip which inſpir'd his ſong,
Fair in defect, and *amiably* wrong.
Ye deathleſs names, ye ſons of endleſs praiſe,
By virtue crown'd with never-fading bays!
Say, ſhall an artleſs muſe, if you inſpire,
Light her pale lamp at your immortal fire?
Shou'd ſhe attempt, O may ſhe faultleſs claim
A ſmall, a temporary wreath of fame?
If ſuch her fate; do thou fair *Truth* deſcend,
And watchful guard her in an honeſt end;
Kindly ſevere, inſtruct her equal line
To court no friend, nor own a foe, but *thine*.
But if her giddy eye ſhou'd vainly quit
Thy ſacred paths, to run the maze of Wit;
If her apoſtate heart ſhou'd e'er incline
To offer incenſe at Corruption's ſhrine;
Urge, urge thy pow'r, the black attempt confound,
And daſh the ſmoaking cenſer to the ground;
Till aw'd to fear, inſtructed bards may ſee
That guilt is doom'd to ſink in infamy.

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